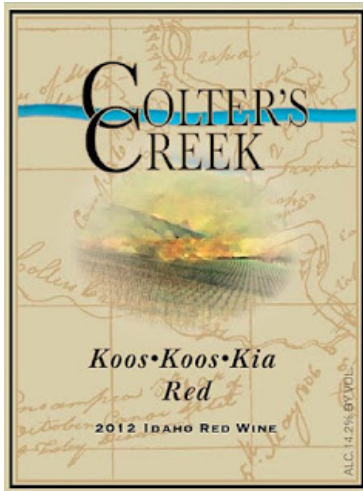


Re-discovering Idaho Wines: Colter's Creek Koos-Koos-Kia Red 2012

By Hoke Harden, December 18, 2015



The quandary of commerce and the perils of boutique wine.

The American paradigm of business is to establish a company, hope that it grows and prospers, and eventually makes you wealthy. The craft, or boutique, version of that is establishing a winery because it is what you love to do, do it so well that you get acclaim for it, and make just enough of a living---and profit---to sustain your vocation and avocation.

That devotion to quality and authenticity, that love of the finely crafted and personal, is apparently what drives winemaker Melissa Sanborn at Colter's Creek Winery in the Idaho Snake River Valley AVA.

Since this region is not exactly the burgeoning crossroads of wine, and takes an inevitable back seat to the powerhouses of California, Washington, Oregon, and distribution is tough outside the city of Boise and environs, you have to be dedicated to settle here and make wine.

The quandary of commerce and the peril of boutique wine is simple: you may have a hard time getting noticed, and customers may have a hard time even finding your wine in the first place.

The quandary of commerce? That is the case with Colter's Creek Winery Koos-Koos-Kia Red 2012. It got noticed—as in a Gold Medal and impressive 92 point score at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition--- but you still may never see it in the market. Apparently, if you don't live in Idaho, drive through the center of the state, or join the Colter's Creek Wine Club, the Koos-Koos-Kia Red may be one of the loveliest wines you're never going to taste. And that's a shame.

The perils of boutique wine? It costs money to make good wine these days. And if you don't have the dubious benefits of volume, you have to price your wines so you don't lose money (love only goes so far; and banks don't feel much of it). That means the Koos-Koos-Kia is priced at \$22.00 SRP---quite likely more than that, what with shipping or wholesaler/retailer markups. And \$22.00 is a dangerous price point for an impulse buy---mostly because there are any number of competitive products out there.

So....Colter's Creek Koos-Koos-Kia is likely difficult to find and a bit pricy for a punt. Should you make the effort, or just let it go?

Make the effort.

Call it the joy of discovery. Call it supporting the beleaguered boutique winemaker. Call it the unending search for the elusive wine. Call it looking for love in all the right places (even if obscure to many of us).

Make the effort because Koos-Koos-Kia is worth it. It is a medium-bodied, superbly balanced (leaning new world, yes; with a ripeness that is carefully held in check by the winemaker) wine



artfully blended and managed by Sanborn. Koos-Koos-Kia is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petite Verdot. And a gorgeously blended blend at that.

If this wine came from Napa Valley, you'd rave about what a great value it was.

And why would a blend be potentially better than a single variety? Sanborn balances out the varieties and their attributes to create a harmonious whole. No empty spaces or rough edges here.

Despite the high scores and gold medals, this isn't one of those over-manipulated monstrosities. It is not a blockbuster or a bombshell of a wine. It's not "spoofulated" in the slightest, simply an exquisitely made small-batch wine that will charm everyone at the table. It's rich (but restrained), elegant, smooth and perfectly balanced.

So, what's with the name, you might ask? "Koos-Koos-Kia" is from the Nez Perce name for the Clearwater River; it means 'transparent waters'.

If you see it, buy it. If you haven't seen it, do some clicking and googling---like on the winery website---to see if you can get some. It's the kind of wine that might restore the excitement you used to have about wine. Remember that?

